Emotion

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Edited by
Jens Kreinath, Jan Snoek and Michael Stausberg

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EMOTION*

Dorothea Lüddeckens

Rituals can be performed, observed, and described. They are sensory expressions of human culture for those who participate in them. Now emotions, inasmuch as they naturally accompany human experiences and activities, play a part in rituals as well. The present article seeks, on the one hand, to provide an overview of the ongoing discussion in ritual theory regarding emotion. On the basis of this overview, we undertake a systematic analysis of various perspectives on the relationship between emotion and ritual. On the other hand, we examine the question of why rituals are so well suited as an 'accompaniment' to emotional processes. In the course of our considerations we will develop an interpretation of ritual as a site of emotional experience—a site invested with a most particular power for dealing with emotions. To begin with, however, let us specify what we mean here by the terms 'emotion' and 'ritual'.

1. *'Emotion' and 'Ritual'*

1.1. *Emotion—A Polysemic Category of Description*

> What are emotions? To most of us, the question hardly needs asking; emotions are the most immediate, the most self-evident, and the most relevant of our orientations toward life. But from the moment the question is taken seriously, troubling difficulties of definition arise.[1]

Since the mid-1970s the number of 'studies on emotion' has increased significantly and investigations into the subject have been conducted in a wide variety of scientific disciplines. Today one can even speak

* I would like to express my thanks to Karolina Weening for translating this article and to Marcus Brainard for further revisions.

[1] W.M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling. A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001), 3. For an example see *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Multimedia edition, 1999), art. "Emotion".

of 'the field of emotion research'.[2] Nevertheless, there is still no consensus as to what emotions are or how the term can be usefully defined. Even within the disciplines involved in the debate—neurology and psychology,[3] sociology,[4] anthropology and ethnology, history and literature—no consensus has been reached.

W.M. Reddy identifies three revolutions in the field of emotion research in recent years:

> Psychologists have found ways of applying laboratory techniques devised for the study of cognition to questions involving emotion sparking one revolution. Ethnographers have developed new field techniques and a new theoretical apparatus for understanding the cultural dimension of emotions,[5] sparking a second. Finally, historians and literary critics have discovered that emotions have a kind of history (but what kind is not entirely clear).[6]

What is clear, however, is that emotions are 'children of their times',[7] to be understood within a particular cultural and historical context.

The discussion of the definition and understanding of emotion turns on a number of questions. One subject of ongoing debate (a debate that has yet to yield any satisfying consensus) is the relationship between emotions and cognition;[8] the boundary between the

[2] J. Corrigan, "Introduction: Emotions Research and the Academic Study of Religion", J. Corrigan (ed), *Religion and Emotion. Approaches and Interpretations* (Oxford, New York, 2004), 31–31.

[3] J.C. Borod (ed.), *The Neuropsychology of Emotion* (Series in Affective Science; Oxford, 2000); P. Ekman and K.R. Scherer (eds), *Approaches to Emotion* (Hillsdale, N.J., 1984).

[4] H. Flam, *Soziologie der Emotionen. Eine Einführung* (Konstanz, 2002).

[5] U. Wikan assumes it is a nonverbal 'resonance' of emotions which makes it possible for ethnologists to understand and communicate beyond cultural limits. See U. Wikan, *Managing Turbulent Hearts. A Balinese Formula for Living* (Chicago, 1990) and U. Wikan, "Beyond the Words. The Power of Resonance", *American Ethnologist* 19 (1992), 460–482. Regarding emotions and body language see E. Hatfield, J.T. Cacioppo, and R.L. Rapson, *Emotional Contagion* (Studies in Emotion and Social Interaction; Cambridge, 1994). Among ethnographic studies of pre-eminent importance is M. Rosaldo, *Knowledge and Passion. Ilongot Notions of Self and Social Life* (Cambridge, 1980).

[6] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, x.

[7] See, e.g., A. Kneppe and D. Metzler (eds), *Die emotionale Dimension antiker Religiosität* (Forschungen zur Anthropologie und Religionsgeschichte 37; Münster, 2003).

[8] R.B. Zajonc, "Feeling and Thinking. Preferences Need No Inferences", *American Psychologist* 35 (1980), 151–175. For a contrasting position see R.S. Lazarus, "Thoughts on the Relations between Emotion and Cognition", *American Psychologist* 37 (1982), 1019–1024. For an overview see B. Parkinson and A.S.R. Manstead, "Appraisal as a Cause of Emotion", M.S. Clark (ed.), *Emotion*, (Review of Personality and Social Psychology 13; Newbury Park, CA, 1992), 122–149. For recent approaches see D. Barnett and H.H. Ratner, "Introduction. The Organization and Integration of Cognition and Emotion in Development", *Journal of Nonverbal Behaviour* 17 (1997), 303–316. See also R. DeSousa, *The Rationality of Emotion* (Cambridge/Mass, 1987).

two fields also remains moot. The question of biological foundation[9] versus social construction of emotions is still open as well, the conclusions here running the gamut from an absolute cultural relativism[10] to a universally conceived neurological conception.[11]

Against the backdrop of these studies, the present paper sets out from the position that, while emotions can indeed be examined from a neurological perspective, that fact does not in itself indicate the operation of a universal process independent of cultural influence. Rather, both genetically conditioned and culturally learned emotional reactions should be assumed—though even emotional reactions that can be traced to a genetic foundation are interpreted by the experiencer according to patterns that have been determined culturally. In short, there is always a cultural factor at work.

In any event, on the descriptive level the term 'emotion' is a constructed category of description that can be differentiated in several ways from the other relevant categories: cognition and sensory perception. In the present paper emotion is understood as a polysemic

[9] On the question of culturally independent emotions see, e.g., R. Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth. The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston, 1989). Rosaldo speaks of a 'force' of emotions that is culture-independent. Moreover, he assumes the existence of universal linkages, such as grief and anger, that can be found independently of a particular cultural context. See also A. Kleinman, V. Das, and M. Lock, *Social Suffering* (Berkeley, 1997).

[10] "Emotion is culture", says Grima in B. Grima, *The Performance of Emotion among Paxtun Women. "The Misfortune which has befallen me"* (Austin, 1992), 6. Besnier also stresses the cultural aspect of emotions, although he does not exclude a biological-universal component in each instance. See N. Besnier "The Politics of Emotion in Nukulaelae Gossip", J.A. Russell, J.M. Fernández-Dols, A.S.R. Manstead, and J.C. Wellenkamp (eds), *Everyday Conceptions of Emotion* (Dordrecht, 1995), 221–240, here 236. See also C. Lutz and G.M. White, "The Anthropology of Emotions", *Annual Reviews Anthropology* 15 (1986), 405–436; C.A. Lutz, *Unnatural Emotions. Everyday Sentiments on a Micronesian Atoll and their Challenge to Western Theory* (Chicago, London, 1988); L. Abu-Lughod, *Veiled sentiments. Honor and Poetry in a Bedouin Society* (Berkeley, 1986); W.M. Reddy, "Against Constructionism. The Historical Ethnography of Emotions", *Current Anthropology* 38 (1997), 327–351. Based on language analyses Wierzbicka offers eleven "emotional universals" for discussion in A. Wierzbicka, *Emotions across Languages and Cultures. Diversity and Universals* (Cambridge, 1999).

[11] See J. Panksepp, "A Critical Role for 'Affective Neuroscience' in Resolving what is Basic about Basic Emotions", *Psychological Review* 99 (1992), 554–560; W.C. Drevets and M.E. Raichle, "Reciprocal Suppression of Regional Cerebral Blood Flow During Emotional versus Higher Cognitive Processes. Implications for Interactions between Emotion and Cognition", *Cognition and Emotion* 12 (1998), 353–385.

descriptive category embracing 'extended families' of words rather than governing a strictly defined field. This approach makes it possible to discuss a broad spectrum of ritual theories despite the fact that they may employ quite dissimilar understandings of emotion and may originate in quite distinct scientific languages whose terms are by no means interchangeable. 'Emotion' will thus signify the German family of words *Gefühl, Stimmung, Affekt,* and *Emotion,* the French family of words *sentiment, disposition,* and *émotion,* and the English family of words 'feeling', 'sentiment', 'mood', 'affect', and 'emotion'.[12]

1.2. *Rituals—Culturally Shaped Spaces of Experience*

Like 'emotion', the term 'ritual' and its related terms, 'rite' and 'ceremony', are not employed in a uniform fashion. In order not to exclude prematurely any ritual theory that has arisen in other contexts but that might well prove to be stimulating for and relevant to our present task, the term 'ritual' will not be defined here too strictly. With this in mind, and as a way of approaching the special power of rituals for dealing with emotions, we take rituals in the following discussion to be culturally shaped spaces of experience that display a clear structure, make use of already-existing symbol systems, and offer a variety of sensible dimensions and a determinate plane of performance or action. This understanding of ritual will shape the structure of our considerations as we explore diverse ritual theories. In the final part of our discussion we can then take up the question of how rituals interact with emotions in and through the four components of ritual just mentioned: a symbol system, sensory stimuli, a structural dimension, and a plane of performance or action.

[12] For attempts to compare emotions in different cultures see K.G. Heider, *Landscapes of Emotion. Mapping Three Cultures of Emotion in Indonesia* (Cambridge, 1991); S. Kitayama, H.R. Markus, and H. Matsumoto, "Culture, Self, and Emotion. A Cultural Perspective on 'Self-Conscious' Emotions", J.P. Tangney and K.W. Fischer (eds), *Self-Conscious Emotions. The Psychology of Shame, Guilt, Embarrassment, and Pride* (New York, 1995), 439–464.

2. *The Relationship between Ritual and Emotion*

In this section we shall consider the extent to which the subject of emotion has entered into the discussion in ritual theory. As will become clear, the ritual act and the emotions linked to it cannot be separated from one another in the concrete execution of the ritual. In order to investigate the relationship between the ritual act and the emotional experience, however, an analytical separation can and indeed must be undertaken.

In our attempt to systematize the various approaches to the relationship between ritual and emotion, it is necessary to bear in mind that these approaches are by no means mutually exclusive. Rather, we find diverse perspectives which bring diverse aspects of that relationship to the fore. Determinative for a given perception or a given construction in ritual theory is the analytical point of view adopted with respect to the ritual, and the particular point of entry, so to speak, through which the ritual is accessed. In our discussion this will mean that the various approaches to ritual theory will be considered with regard to not one but several aspects of the relationship between ritual and emotion. Concretely, the following aspects will be considered in addressing the question of the various possible relations between ritual and emotion:

Rituals can take up and make use of existing emotions, one that were already on hand independently of the given ritual. This real possibility allows us to consider the relationship between emotion and ritual in two respects: On the one hand, the emotions already present can be examined as catalysts or triggers for a given ritual; on the other hand, that ritual can be examined as the representational medium wherein emotions already present can be embodied or communicated.

However, in the section 2.1.3 below, which is entitled "Emotions and Rituals in Dynamic Interaction", we will see that a theory of clear causality or chronological sequence—that is, first the emotion, then the ritual—can be sustained only with qualifications. However, this very limitation on a causal relation can be turned to our advantage. It opens up the possibility of a manifold of other relations and directs our attention to the question of the extent to which rituals constitute a medium for coping with emotion, given that within the ritual procedure emotions can be both communicated and transformed. Furthermore, just as we can ask about the extent to which

emotions bring forth rituals, so we can turn the question around and ask about the extent to which rituals call forth emotions. Furthermore, in the latter case, the emotions called forth in ritual may serve quite different functions for the ritual. They may also have a relevance that extends beyond the ritual itself. Once the issue of the function of emotions within rituals comes into focus, the question of a sequential and causal relationship between the two is resolved, for these functions exist and continue to exist regardless of whether they were already present before the ritual or were called forth in the course of the ritual.

2.1. *Ritual's Use of Existing Emotion*

2.1.1. *Emotion as an Occasion for Ritual—Ritual as a Reaction to Emotion*

The ritual expressions of mourning following the accidental death of Princess Diana, and especially the way in which these arose and the consequences they produced, provide a good example of ritual forms that take shape in connection with emotions already on hand. Diana's sudden death released a wave of shock and mourning which the House of Windsor had neither expected nor especially desired. In the days following her death, Lady Di's 'supporters' organized unofficial manifestations of grief and tribute on such a scale that the royal house saw itself compelled to allot far more ritual space to the mourning over Diana than had at first been planned.

A number of ritual theories suggest such a causal correlation between emotion and ritual, and ritual studies dealt quite early with the role of emotion. Mary Douglas observed that in nineteenth century the so-called 'primitive religions' were supposed to be inspired by feelings of fear.[13] Her analysis might be extended and turned into an explanation of the origin and existence of the rituals of these religions as well, thus placing the whole in a causal relationship.[14]

Émile Durkheim, Marcel Mauss, Robert Hertz, and Arnold van Gennep followed this interpretation only partially. Although they, too, acknowledge that emotion can serve as the origin or "occasion"[15]

[13] Douglas 1966, 1.

[14] See, e.g., B. Malinowski, *Magic, Science, and Religion* (London, 1974), 47–53.

[15] É. Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912), trans. J.W. Swain (London, 1976), 403.

of rituals, their theories also show that the relationship between emotion and ritual is considerably more complex. For Durkheim rituals are closely linked to emotions that refer to and impact upon the social community. The death of a member of society, for example, is experienced by the various individual surviving members as a weakening of the collective; hence, the arising of grief is virtually inevitable.[16] But the subsequent collective experience of a shared ritual activity (such as keening) leads to the awareness of commonly shared emotion and thereby to the assurance of the continuity of the collective—and to the end of grief.[17]

Not only the death of a member but also other events, such as a crop failure, can send the social community into "sorrow and fear", according to Durkheim.[18] The concomitant "distress in which the society finds itself" serves then as an occasion for ceremony:[19]

> Everything that inspires sentiments, of sorrow or fear necessitates a piaculum and is therefore called piacular. So this word seems to be very well adapted for designating the rites which are celebrated by those in a state of uneasiness or sadness.[20]

In the ritual as such, however, the ritual expression and the individually experienced emotions can be quite distinct:

> Mourning is not the spontaneous expression of individual emotions. . . . it is more generally the case that there is no connection between the sentiments felt and the gestures made by the actors in the rite. . . . it is a ritual attitude which he is forced to adopt out of respect for the custom, but which is, in a large measure, independent of his affective state.[21]

[16] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 401.

[17] See Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 394–396. ". . . men do not weep for the dead because they fear them; they fear them, because they weep for them. But this change of the affective state can only be a temporary one, for while the ceremonies of mourning result from it, they also put an end to it. Little by little they neutralize the very causes which have given rise to them. The foundation of mourning is the impression of a loss which the group feels, when it loses one of its members. But this very impression results in bringing individuals together, in putting them into closer relations with one another in associating them all in the same mental state, and therefore in disengaging a sensation of comfort which compensates the original loss." Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 401.

[18] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 403–404.

[19] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 403.

[20] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 389.

[21] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 397.

Stepping out of the ritual expression can also signify the end of the emotion that was linked to it.[22] Thus for Durkheim rituals are not the result of individually experienced emotions. Rituals are not concerned, for example, with a merely personal loss and, generally speaking, the ritual performers are not expressing simply subjective feelings. Rather, Durkheim views rituals as a fundamental way for the community to respond to emotions that are shared by individual members of a collective and that in fact have the community as their reference.[23]

2.1.2. *Rituals as the 'Stage' for Existing Emotions*

Half a century later Clifford Geertz too interpreted rituals as an important societal means for dealing with existing emotions. Whereas for Durkheim emotions prepare the way for ritual events, Geertz's interpretation of the Balinese cockfight[24] sees them as providing the actual script of the ritual. The ritual not only displays the social-status relationships within Balinese society but also provides a vent for the relevant emotions, according to Geertz. The ritual is an "Aesopian representation of the complex fields of tension set up by the controlled, muted, ceremonial, but for all that deeply felt, interaction of those selves in the context of everyday life."[25] The magnitude of the ritual-related emotions is directly correlated with the 'depth' of the ritual: "The 'deeper' the match . . . the greater the emotion that will be involved and the more the general absorption in the match."[26] Thus the ritual deals with existing emotions, structures and endows them with coherence, gives them significance, and makes them "meaningful-visible, tangible, graspable-'real,' in an ideational sense."[27] Geertz finds that the ritual, by representing emotions, exposes the emotions publicly and thus makes it possible for the Balinese to deal with them.[28] The ritual reveals to its participants how their reality—and also the reality of their emotions—looks and how it functions;

[22] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 397.
[23] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 399.
[24] C. Geertz, "Deep Play. Notes on the Balinese Cockfight", *Daedalus* 101 (1972), 1–37.
[25] Geertz, "Deep Play", 17.
[26] Geertz, "Deep Play", 22 (the typography here follows the author's).
[27] Geertz, "Deep Play", 23.
[28] Geertz, "Deep Play", 25–26.

thus the ritual becomes a '*model of*' reality. At the same time the ritual is also a '*model for*' reality inasmuch as it demonstrates how reality ought to function—that is, how individuals ought to cope with their emotions within this reality.

2.1.3. *Emotions and Rituals in Dynamic Interaction*

Geertz's analysis further suggests that the relationship between emotions existing before the ritual begins and those felt and expressed in the course of the ritual is a complex one: "Quartets, still lifes, and cockfights are not merely reflections of a preexisting sensibility analogically represented; they are positive agents in the creation and maintenance of such a sensibility."[29] When considered in the context of ritual events and ritual experience, emotions are neither simply preexistent nor simply resultant; rather, they are both inherent in the ritual from the very start and at the same time constantly recreated or even strengthened in the ritual process. What Phoebe C. Ellsworth and William M. Reddy claim for the expression of emotions in general can be asserted all the more for the expression of emotions in rituals: "The [emotional] process almost always begins before the name [of the emotion] and almost always continues after it. The realization of the name undoubtedly changes the feeling, simplifying and clarifying."[30] With regard to the collective expression of feelings, Durkheim too had taken up this aspect of ritual: "We have seen elsewhere how human sentiments are intensified when affirmed collectively."[31] Later he states, "Now, as always the pooling of these sentiments results in intensifying them. By affirming themselves, they exalt and impassion themselves and attain a degree of violence of the gestures which express them."[32] According to Reddy, "Emotion and emotional expression interact in a dynamic way. I provide

[29] Geertz, "Deep Play", 28. Durkheim was likewise unable to find a simple causal connection between the emotions that were already present before the ritual and those that received expression in the ritual. "Not only do the relatives, who are affected the most directly, bring their own personal sorrow to the assembly, but the society exercises a moral pressure over its members, to put their sentiments in harmony with the situation." Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 399.
[30] P. Ellsworth, "Levels of Thought and Levels of Emotion", P. Ekman and R.J. Davidson (eds), *The Nature of Emotion. Fundamental Questions* (Series in Affective Science; Oxford, 1994), 192–196 and 192–193. Quoted from Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, xii.
[31] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 400.
[32] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 407.

evidence to suggest that this one aspect of emotional expression *is* universal . . ."[33]

2.2. *Rituals as Medium or Vehicle for Management of Emotions*

2.2.1. *The Transformation of Emotions within Ritual Processes*

Although emotions can be a trigger for rituals or for participation in rituals, emotions and ritual expression also interact with one another, as we have seen. Thus the ritual expression can alter and transform emotions and this in turn can trigger further changes in the participants, even beyond the emotional plane. This is particularly evident in mourning rituals, as well as in healing rituals, and applies both to the individual participant and to the group as a whole. Thomas J. Scheff ascribes to rituals an all but therapeutic function in view of their potential "for coping with universal distress".[34] According to his analysis, rituals endow their participants with an "esthetic distance"[35] not only to the ritual event but also to their own emotions. 'Esthetic distance' refers to a kind of detachment of the ritual participant from the ritual event so as to become aware of the ongoing situation *as a ritual*—that is, as something performed or represented, and not as unmediated reality. Yet at the same time this very possibility permits the participant to be caught up in the event *as a ritual*, permitting a situation from the past to be re-experienced in the present. "Esthetic distance involves a balanced experience of a present and past scene, seemingly simultaneously." In contrast, "overdistanced experience" is "completely cognitive" and thus hinders an emotional immersion in the event: "Total overdistancing involves responding only to the nonemotional aspects of the present environment—there is no emotional resonance at all." The opposite is "underdistancing . . . the return of repressed emotion in

[33] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, xii (author's emphasis). See also B. Kapferer, "Emotion and Feeling in Sinhalese Healing Rites", *Social Analysis* 1 (1979), 153–176, here 154: "Performance both expresses and creates what it represents." Reddy quotes Bertrand Russell, who recalls an encounter with Lady Ottoline: "I did not know I loved you till I heard myself telling you so—for one instant I thought 'Good God, what have I said?' and then I knew it was the truth" (Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, 102–103).

[34] Scheff 1977, 484.

[35] Scheff 1977, 486.

a situation in which it is not appropriate".[36] In this case the participant fails to perceive the ritual framework and context of the event. What is called for then is an adequate or appropriate detachment. Scheff maintains that effective rituals allow one to remember and re-experience "repressed emotions" in a "safe situation",[37] and thus "emotional distress" can be understood as "catharsis".[38]

Citing Scheff, Bruce Kapferer demonstrates on the basis of healing rituals that within ritual structures it is particularly the ritual's ability to shift among different perspectives of 'esthetic distance'—its alternation between underdistancing and overdistancing—which plays a decisive role in the positive effect of the ritual. The varying emotional near-far 'distances' of the participants ensures the dynamic nature of the ritual act and thus makes the healing process possible.[39]

Ritual theory has devoted considerable attention to the significance of rituals for emotion management, and this is particularly apparent in the case of mourning rituals.[40] Some studies have also attempted to provide evidence for the negative consequences that can ensue if no adequate rituals are available to the grieving party.[41] The death of another person is generally assumed to trigger emotions of grief, fear, or anger, and inasmuch as rituals offer models for understanding the world, they also offer the possibility to 'make room' for these emotions within the model of the world. The emotions are thus placed in relation to this understanding of the world and thereby receive legitimacy and justification. This occurs insofar as an explanation for the presence of these emotions is offered and the object

[36] Scheff 1977, 486.

[37] Scheff 1977, 487.

[38] Scheff 1977, 484–485. "I define catharsis as the discharge of one or more of four distressful emotions: grief, fear, embarrassment, or anger. These emotions are physical states of tension in the body produced by stress. . . . In the absence of interference, these tension states will be spontaneously discharged by convulsive, involuntary bodily processes whose external manifestations are weeping, for grief, shivering and cold sweat, for fear . . . This definition of catharsis is unusual in making a sharp distinction between emotion as distress and emotion as discharge" (485).

[39] Kapferer (ed.) 1979, 170–173.

[40] See also Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 408: "In a word, even when religious ceremonies have a disquieting or saddening event as their point of departure, they retain their stimulating power over the affective state of the group and individuals. By the mere fact that they are collective, they raise the vital tone. When one feels life within him—whether it be in the form of painful irritation or happy enthusiasm—he does not believe in death."

[41] G. Gorer, *Death, Grief, and Mourning* (Garden City, 1965). See also L. Pincus, *Death and the Family. The Importance of Mourning* (New York, 1974).

of the emotions—to what or to whom they refer—is acknowledged, the value that the emotions have for the individual or for the social group is recognized, and guidelines are available for coping with them. Rituals offer a safe space for expressing emotions in forms that are in part already given. Moreover, they incorporate actions and activities that are understood as 'generating satisfaction'. Thus a fear of the power of the dead, for example, can be overcome by means of ritual protective measures,[42] and the fear of one's own death can be contained by adhering to the injunctions set forth in taboos.[43]

The ritual process takes hold of the participants' emotions and can transform them in the ritual process. This constitutes a valuable contribution to emotion management which benefits not only the individual participant but the whole community.[44]

2.2.2. *The Ritual Communication of Emotions*

Often the transformative power that rituals exert upon emotions is viewed in the light of rituals' ability to communicate emotions. Both Durkheim and Geertz took up the idea of rituals as a communications medium for emotions. According to Durkheim, the individual demonstrates his belonging to the group through the public expression of emotion during the ritual process. The collective expression of emotion in turn can intensify the affective state. Moreover, this collective expression serves the maintenance of the social group:

> Since they weep together, they hold to one another and the group is not weakened, in spite of the blow which has fallen upon it. . . . The exceptional violence of the manifestations by which the common pain is necessarily and obligatorily expressed even testifies to the fact that at this moment, the society is more alive and active than ever.[45]

And in the end it is the communication of grief which allows that grief to be left behind.

For Geertz too rituals are not about the simple manifestation of emotions but about their communication. Betting or gambling constitutes a highly complex social phenomenon that can also be viewed as a communication system, as can fighting. In both instances emotions are displayed and exchanged in a framework governed by specific rules. Accordingly, emotions are not only communicated within the group; they are also communicated by the ritual itself to the individual participant. Geertz observes that on Bali certain feelings that are otherwise veiled by the "haze of etiquette"[46] become, in the cockfight, "enveloped",[47] and thereby communicated: "Jealousy is as much a part of Bali as poise, envy as grace, brutality as charm. But without the cockfight the Balinese would have a much less certain understanding of them, which is, presumably, why they value it so highly."[48]

2.3. *Rituals Call Forth Emotions*

As we have seen, rituals are able to draw specifically desired emotions out of the participants. The emotions thus produced can possess a meaning and a function for the ritual itself, but can also extend beyond it. The Passover feast, for instance, celebrates the joy of the exodus from Egypt, while at the same time the ritual and the related emotions keep this memory alive:

> In every single generation it is a man's duty to regard himself as if he had come out of Egypt, as it is said: "And thou shalt tell thy son in that day, saying: It is because of that which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt" (Ex. 13:8). Not only our fathers did the Holy One, blessed be He, redeem, but us also He redeemed with them; . . . Therefore, it is our duty to thank, praise, laud, glorify, exalt, honor, bless, extol, and adore Him who performed for our fathers and

[42] It should not be overlooked, however, that fear of the dead can also be seen as the *myth* that the ritual practice legitimates. See, e.g., Durkheim: "men do not weep for the dead because they fear them; they fear them because they weep for them." Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 401.

[43] See also Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 408: "In a word, even when religious ceremonies have a disquieting or saddening event as their point of departure, they retain their stimulating power over the affective state of the group and individuals. By the mere fact that they are collective, they raise the vital tone. When one feels life within him—whether it be in the form of painful irritation or happy enthusiasm—he does not believe in death."

[44] For an example of the capacity of rituals for transforming a particular, individually experienced emotion (sanskr. *bhāva*) into a de-personalized sentiment (sanskr. *rasa*), see the analysis of a Krishna sect from the Mount Ghovardan Region in P.M. Toomey, "Krishna's Consuming Passions. Food as Metaphor and Metonym for Emotion at Mount Govardhan", O.M. Lynch (ed.), *Divine Passions. Social Construction of Emotions in India* (Berkeley, 1990), 157–181.

[45] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 401–402.

[46] Geertz, "Deep Play", 25.

[47] Geertz, "Deep Play", 25.

[48] Geertz, "Deep Play", 26.

> for us all these wonders. He brought us forth from slavery to freedom, from anguish to joy, from mourning to festivity, from darkness to great light, and from bondage to redemption. Let us sing before Him a new song. Halleluja![49] And this is taught by the masters of the Talmud: A man is in duty bound to make his children and his household rejoice on a Festival, for it is said: And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast . . . Where with does he make them rejoice? With wine.[50]

Here it is obvious that rituals not only take up and express existing emotions but are specifically intended to generate, even provoke specific emotions in their participants. While the ritual with its attendant emotions serves to quicken and preserve a particular memory, the emotions can also be relevant in this regard for the ritual itself by making it memorable.

2.3.1. *Emotions as Vehicles of Memory*

Rituals that are seldom performed are often those that call forth particularly intense emotional experiences, according to Harvey Whitehouse. Such experiences are likely to be long remembered by the participants and this serves to ensure their survival.[51] However, in light of several counter-examples it becomes questionable whether the infrequency of rituals does in fact correlate with the intensity of emotions experienced. Nevertheless, Whitehouse's observation that emotions preserve the memory of the ritual itself is important. If one does take this observation seriously, it becomes possible to understand why for some participants—contrary to Whitehouse's thesis—it is precisely the repetition of certain rituals which facilitates a more intense emotional experience. Every fresh experience of the 'same' ritual is amplified by the memory of previous performances of this ritual. When one considers that the emotions called forth in the present ritual performance can call up the memory of emotions elicited in previous performances of the ritual, one can understand that the

[49] A.M. Silver (ed.), *The Complete Seder. Step-by-Step Directions, Halakhic References, Reasons, and Sources for the Customs of the Seder* (New York, 1980), 27–28.

[50] *The Babylonian Talmud*, Seder Mo'ed, vol. III, Erubin Pesahim (London, 1938), Pesahim 109 a, 563.

[51] H. Whitehouse, "Memorable Religions. Transmission, Codification, and Change in Divergent Melanesian Contexts", *Man* n.s. 27 (1992), 777–797; H. Whitehouse, *Inside the Cult. Religious Innovation and Transmission in Papua New Guinea* (Oxford Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology; Oxford, 1995).

repetition increases both the complexity and the intensity of the emotional experience.

2.3.2. *Emotions as Carriers of Ritual Meaning and Message*

For Robert N. McCauley and E. Thomas Lawson, the emotions elicited in the course of a ritual event serve not only to preserve the memory of the ritual but also to make conscious the significance of the ritual event for the individual participants.[52] McCauley and Lawson correlate the magnitude of the emotions that come forth with the role played within the ritual structure by what they call a 'CPS-Agent' (culturally postulated superhuman agent).[53] If a ritual is performed by a 'CPS-Agent', or if one of the performers is seen as the intermediary of a 'CPS-Agent', the effects of this ritual will be understood as timeless and consequently the ritual need not be repeated:

> These rituals contain high levels of sensory pageantry and emotional arousal because participants must *remember* these unique ritual experiences, and they also must emerge from them with the *conviction* not only that something profound has transpired, but also that the actions of the gods are ultimately, if not proximally, responsible for that profundity.[54]

Geertz maintains that the emotions experienced during a ritual afford an "authoritative experience",[55] validating and confirming the system of symbols that are ritually displayed and that themselves embody "conceptions of a general order of existence".[56] Now these conceptions may also refer to the political sphere, as David I. Kertzer has demonstrated.[57] In view of their links to "a limited pool of powerful symbols", emotions can be employed in political rituals so as to reinforce political messages:[58]

[52] Lawson and McCauley 1990; McCauley and Lawson 2002.

[53] McCauley 2001, 124.

[54] McCauley 2001, 135–136 (author's emphasis).

[55] "The constantly recurring struggle of Rangda and Barong to an inevitable draw is thus—for the believing Balinese—both the formulation of a general religious conception and the authoritative experience which justifies, even compels, its acceptance" (Geertz 1966, 35).

[56] Geertz 1966, 4; see also Geertz 1966, 12–24.

[57] Kertzer 1988.

[58] Kertzer 1988, 95. See also J. McManus, "Ritual and Human Social Cognition", in D'Aquili, Laughlin J., McManns (eds) 1979, 216–248, here 227.

> If political rites encourage certain interpretations of the world, they do so in no small part because of the powerful emotions that they trigger. Our perceptions and interpretations are strongly influenced by our emotional states, but the process works very much in the reverse direction as well. Our fears are aroused, terror incited, joy created through rites that channel our political perceptions.[59]

Culturally established associations between certain symbols and certain emotions can be deliberately and effectively exploited within a ritual for specific purposes. First, the employment of symbols allows the ritual to hook up with the on-hand emotions, and then, in the course of the ritual performance, these symbols and their emotions can be placed in a new or unexpected context and perspective. In their new context the symbols can be hooked up to yet other emotions, thus transmitting a new and unexpected message. As an example: A social group that has hitherto evoked only negatively-charged associations can, during a ritual event, be symbolically placed in a new context, one charged with a positive emotional association. Through the performance of the ritual, this group can now become a more positively perceived entity. Typical here would be the way in which Nazi rituals made use of Christian symbols. But Christian rituals, too, can borrow symbols that were originally at home elsewhere. A Christian youth service, for example, might integrate positively-charged emotional symbols that in fact stem from the non-Christian youth culture. In this way the participants at the youth church service may experience positive emotions that previously would not have been associated with church events. These symbols and the emotions attendant upon them transmit a message that from now on can be associated with the performance of the Christian ritual. In any case, emotions support the transmission of cognitive messages in the course of a ritual event:

Successful ritual has just this structure. It creates an emotional state that makes the message uncontestable because it is framed in such a way as to be seen as inherent in the way things are. It presents a picture of the world that is so emotionally compelling that it is beyond debate.[60]

[59] Kertzer 1988, 99.
[60] Kertzer 1988, 101.

2.2.3. *Emotions as Motivating Factor in Ritual Participation*

Rituals stir up emotions in order to ensure their own remembrance and to mediate a message linked with the given emotions. The employment of emotions, however, also motivates people to participate. Where the message and significance of a ritual has become less well-known among the individual members of a ritual community, and where a shared social consciousness is not particularly strong among its members, the ritual's potential for releasing or taking hold of emotions together with the expectation of a positive emotional experience can constitute the decisive motivating factor in the decision to participate in the ritual.[61] Church youth groups, for example, will take pains to create an atmosphere at youth services which is at once both relaxed and emotionally stimulating. The participants should be involved not only intellectually but also emotionally; indeed, the ritual should become an emotional event. An Agape meal or Eucharist service should spread feelings of community, an Easter service, the feeling of renewal and liberation, and a Christmas service, security and harmony. Generally, however, these emotions are not supposed to become an end in themselves; rather, they play a mediating role, as the preceding discussion has stressed.

2.2.4. *Emotions as a Catalyst for Action*

Closely linked to these considerations is the ritual potential to call up emotions or to intensify latent ones so as to motivate participants to engage in specific actions. Whether war dances, North American election campaigns, or the infamous National Socialist rituals—all call forth a certain aggressiveness that will be important if not decisive for the activities that will follow the ritual. On the other hand, Alfred R. Radcliffe-Brown has called attention to the fact that ritual dances can serve to reduce or diminish feelings of aggression, even to such an extent that the ritual can end in peacemaking:

[61] It stands to reason that emotions are important not only for ritual acts; they are crucial vessels of memory: "With cognitive judgements, there is no reason, other than an affective one, to perfer any goal whatever over some other. Cognitive reasoning may argue that a particular event could lead to loss of money or health or life, but so what? What is wrong with death, other than that it is disliked?" N.H. Frijda, "Emotions Require Cognitions, Even If Simple Ones", P. Ekman and R.J. Davidson (eds), *The Nature of Emotion. Fundamental Questions* (Oxford, 1994), 197–202, here 199.

The purpose of the ceremony is clearly to produce a change in the feelings of the tow parties towards one another, feelings of enmity being replaced through it by feelings of friendship and solidarity. It depends for its effect on the fact that anger and similar aggressive feelings may be appeased by being freely expressed.[62]

2.2.5. *Emotions as 'Bonding Material' for the Ritual Community*

Just as emotions can motivate one to participate in a ritual, so they can serve to bond the individual to the community, at least to the extent that the ritual is itself bound up with community identity. One sees this clearly in initiation rituals, but it may be observed also in community-forging rituals such as the Communion service among Christians. Furthermore, the associated emotions can convey a wealth of information regarding the meaning of the community and its structures—information that extends far beyond the particular ritual event. Durkheim sees in rituals the possibility for the individual to experience feelings that in fact refer to the very existence of the society. In the periodic recurrence of ceremonial rites he finds that the "effect of the cult really is to recreate periodically a moral being upon which we depend as it depends upon us. Now this being does exist: it is society".[63]

In the course of the ritual performance, the participants come to feel that "there is something outside of them which is born again"; in this way they take part in a "collective renovation".[64] Accordingly, Durkheim finds that society is celebrating itself in these rituals, wherein the emotionally experienced interdependency of individual members achieves expression.

Emotions, initiated and expressed through rituals, consequently serve a function both for the individual and for the collective. By taking part in the emotional expressions of the ritual, the individual becomes incorporated in the collective and displays his or her sense of belonging: "Not to be interested in them would be equivalent to breaking the bonds uniting him to the group."[65]

[62] A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, *The Andaman Islanders* (Glencoe, 1964), 238–239. For another example of how war dances can help from a view of the participants to express and overcome grief and anger see G. Wilson, "Nyakyusa Conventions of Burial", *Bantu Studies* 13 (1939), 1–31, here 13.

[63] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 348.

[64] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 349.

[65] Durkheim, *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 400.

Radcliffe-Brown too finds that rituals, as "regulated symbolic expressions of certain sentiments",[66] make an important contribution to society. Sentiments here are understood as "mental dispositions"[67] governing the individual's behavior with respect to other members of the society. Indeed, society is grounded in these sentiments, according to Radcliffe-Brown, and rituals have the power to "regulate, maintain and transmit [these sentiments] from one generation to another".[68] As an example of this process he cites ancestor-rites that reaffirm and strengthen a sense of dependence, expressing both gratitude to the ancestors and a sense of duty to the descendents.[69] Bruno Bettelheim's analysis of the National Socialist 'Heil Hitler' salute documents an example of the emotional power of universally obligatory rituals or ritual elements to reinforce one's sense of belonging to a community: "To Hitler's followers, giving the salute was an expression of self-assertion, of power. Each time a loyal subject performed it, his sense of well-being shot up. For an opponent of the regime it worked exactly opposite."[70] In the latter case, an opponent of Hitler would be made painfully aware both of his outsider position and of the betrayal of his position as he performed this ritual gesture. Hence: "Since one's integration rests on acting in accord with one's beliefs, the only easy way to retain his integration was to change his beliefs."[71]

3. *Ritual as a Space of Emotional Experience*

In the following section we will see that ritual's potential for dealing with emotion consists, first, in the particular way rituals work with symbol systems—specifically, in the way rituals integrate symbols that are part of, and thus give access to, broader symbol systems. Then we shall consider the way in which the power of ritual with respect to emotion lies in the sensible dimension of ritual—

[66] A.R. Radcliffe-Brown, "Religion and Society", *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 75 (1945), 33–45, here 35.

[67] Radcliffe-Brown, "Religion and Society", 43.

[68] Radcliffe-Brown, "Religion and Society", 35, see also 40.

[69] Radcliffe-Brown, "Religion and Society", 43.

[70] B. Bettelheim, *The Informed Heart. Autonomy in a Mass Age* (Glencoe, 1960), 290–291.

[71] Bettelheim, *The Informed Heart*, 291.

specifically, in the effects of sensory stimulation upon the ritual participant. Thereafter, we shall consider the way in which this power is latent within the structure of ritual, both in the structure of a single and concrete ritual process and in that of a complex of interrelated rituals. Finally, this power will be considered in the actual physical performance of the ritual, that is, in the activity of the human body that makes possible the expression and experience of emotion. Though for the purposes of our analysis we shall consider each of the aforementioned dimensions in turn, it must be stressed that these are not to be understood ultimately as separate and discrete elements. On the contrary, ritual's power with respect to emotion consists far more in a ceaseless interplay of overlapping and mutually dependent dimensions. Ultimately, the course of this analysis will place us in a position to take up and develop more fully the understanding of ritual presented at the outset of our considerations here.

3.1. *Rituals draw on Symbol Systems*

The polysemy of ritual symbols, ranging from the normative to the orectic, has been demonstrated by Victor W. Turner. Whereas the prevailing social-structural relations are found at the normative pole, physiological and emotional relations are located at the orectic.[72] In adopting this approach, Turner picked up on the sociological reflections of Durkheim, as well as on the psychological observations of Sigmund Freud. According to Turner, it is precisely in their multivocality and in their reference to a transcendent dimension that symbols facilitate emotional experience. It is here that the transformative power of rituals can develop.[73]

One need not adopt Turner's distinction between a normative and an orectic pole in order to concur with him regarding the cognitive, normative, and emotional meaning of symbols. Symbols can offer the ritual participant access to emotionally-frightening dimensions of the symbol system of which they are a part—be it through the enactment of a well-known myth[74] or in the transmission of a theological teaching. A Hindu bathing in the Ganges, for instance, might be emotionally affected when thinking of the spiritual meaning of mother Ganga; the Lutheran participant at a Communion service might be emotionally affected by the consciousness of Jesus' self-offering. The expressions 'thinking' and 'consciousness' are misleading, however, for at work here is not simply a cognitive but also a sensory and emotional process. Kertzer finds that in the ritual employment of symbols emotions are 're-remembered':

> Symbols have a history of cognitive and emotional associations. Their power comes in part from this history: the childhood memories they arouse, feelings of past solidarity, the way they have been used to define one's own identity and one's understanding of the world.[75]

In connection with the transformation of emotions during the mourning process, we observed that rituals propose models for an understanding of the world, an understanding of human experiences. This occurs insofar as a ritual communicates the elements and relations of a larger, more comprehensive symbol system. Now the ritual may bring these elements and relations together in a context that is already familiar to the ritual participants from the symbol system, or these elements and relations may be re-combined in a new and unfamiliar context. A ritual thereby not only rests upon its own internal system of relationships but also offers access to further and more comprehensive relational complexes extending beyond the particular ritual itself.

For example, in a ritual intended to drive out evil spirits the symbolic elements of the ritual are, of course, internally related and refer to one another. At the same time, these same elements are themselves part of a more comprehensive symbol system—a worldview, for instance. By employing them in the exorcism, a link will be established to that larger, more comprehensive system as well. The power of the demons over their victims, the emotions they arouse both in their victims and in other members of the group, and the possibility of driving them out, can thus be accounted for against the backdrop of the larger, more comprehensive symbol system. Through their access to symbol systems, rituals are able to present experienced

[72] V.W. Turner, "Colour Classification in Ndembu Ritual. A Problem in Primitive Classification", M. Banton (ed.), *Anthropological Approaches to the Study of Religion* (London, 1966), 47–84.

[73] V.W. Turner, *Chihamba the White Spirit. A Ritual Drama of the Ndembu* (The Rhodes Livingstone Papers 33; Manchester, 1962); V.W. Turner, *Revelation and Divination in Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, London, 1975).

[74] See also, e.g., Dow 1986, 56–69; Scheff 1977.

[75] Kertzer 1988, 92.

reality as understandable reality—understandable inasmuch as it can find a place within a larger order. As a consequence, the accompanying emotions can also be integrated into this understanding.

Rituals thereby provide a horizon of explanation and justification for the emotions—a horizon that at the same time extends beyond the concrete ritual that has been enacted. The extent to which symbols customarily linked to particular emotions in a given symbol system can be purposefully redirected and put to use in new contexts so as to produce new emotional relations has been indicated by Kertzer with respect to political rituals. Indeed, the fascist rituals of the Third Reich furnish a multitude of 'successful' examples, such as when church elements were successfully integrated into political contexts.

3.2. *The Sense Dimension of Rituals*

Not only symbols but also immediate bodily, sensory impulses can serve as the vehicles of emotional processes in rituals.[76] Emotions can be roused by means of associations linked to certain stimuli, such as childhood memories, as Kertzer observes. Culture-specific associations, such as the smell of incense in orthodox churches, organ music by Bach during a Protestant service, or Ganges water for Hindus in Benares, can all serve the same function.

Generally speaking, empirical research sets out from the idea that sense perceptions arising from external stimuli are always influenced by cognitive factors and are not simply immediately 'given'. This does not, however, preclude the operation of sensory impulses that have the potential to produce an immediate emotional effect. These would include pain-producing bodily injuries,[77] strong tactile, visual, auditory, and olfactory impulses, as well as the influence of drugs.[78]

[76] "Stimulating ritual participants' senses is the most straightforward, surefire means available for arousing their emotions. The intuition is that the resulting levels of emotional excitement are often at least roughly proportional to the levels of sensory stimulation a ritual contains" (McCauley 2001, 119). See also Kertzer 1988, 10: "The power of ritual, then, stems not just from its social matrix, but also from its psychological underpinnings. Indeed, these two dimensions are inextricably linked. Participation in ritual involves physiological stimuli, the arousal of emotions; ritual works through the senses to structure our sense of reality and our understanding of the world around us."

[77] See, e.g., B. Shell-Duncan and Y. Hernlund, *Female "Circumcision" in Africa. Culture, Controversy and Change* (Directions in Applied Anthropology; Boulder, 2000).

[78] See, e.g., J. Westermeyer, J. Bush, and R. Wintrob, "A Review of the Relationship between Dysphoria, Pleasure, and Human Bonding", *Dis. Nervous System* 39 (1978), 415–424.

The ritual experience of physical violence can lead both to a temporary suspension of 'everyday identity' as well as to the construction of a new one.[79] Sensory stimuli in the ritual event work towards the dissolution of space-time orientations. In the participants' experience emotions function as the decisive arena within which the ritual process can become the space of a 'wholly different' order or even of a 'non-order', the breakdown of all orientation.

With this discussion of the sense dimension of rituals we arrive at yet another fundamental aspect of rituals with respect to their effect upon their participants. For not only are rituals processed cognitively but they are also and always experienced sensorially. Of course, the sensory perceptions are invariably accompanied by cognitive contents and this means that rituals can have no effects that could be considered to be independent of cognitive factors. However, it is precisely through their particular cognitive content that they can produce emotional effects beyond the particular cognitive content. The ritual participants can be 'addressed', as it were, on several sensory levels: they hear, see, smell, and possibly touch the ritual event. Rituals can thus affect those who take part on quite different sensory levels. And through this exploitation of several sensory levels rituals are able to establish links on all of these levels to broader, more comprehensive symbol systems. It is thus possible for rituals to take up symbols from a plurality of sensory levels in a symbol system and to exploit them emotionally.

3.3. *The Structural Dimension of Rituals*

If disorientation and dissolution are always potentially present in emotions, structure—ritual structure—is also present, serving as a vehicle of emotions. Both aspects must be borne in mind. As Kertzer writes: "Ritual action is repetitive and, therefore, often redundant, but these very factors serve as important means of channeling emotion, guiding cognition, and organizing social groups."[80] Consequently, emotions can be deliberately influenced through the deliberate application of structural elements within a ritual, as Scheff's and Kapferer's

[79] On the role of violence in rituals see, e.g., Houseman 1998, 447–467.

[80] Kertzer 1988, 9. Kertzer refers to Leach 1966, 404, and Rappaport 1979, 175–176.

analyses have made clear. The same influence can be achieved with structures that extend beyond the particular ritual in question, calling up experiences that transcend the actual space-time situation. In this sense, a ritual understood by its participants to have existed in its present form long before their own lifetimes and expected by them to continue in just this form throughout the lifetimes of future generations will naturally produce the feeling of belonging to a ritual community that extends far beyond any single individual life. Kertzer maintains that this experience goes even further by "giving us confidence that the world in which we live today is the same world we lived in before and the same world we will have to cope with in the future."[81] Likewise, Barabara Myerhoff explains: "By stating enduring and underlying patterns, ritual connects past, present, and future, abrogating history and time."[82] What Kertzer and Myerhoff claim for the dimension of temporal experience can be argued also regarding the level of spatial experience, as, for instance, in Islamic ritual prayer or in Ramadan rites. Participation in the Islamic ritual testifies here to an emotional incorporation into the Islamic *Umma*, which extends throughout the world, enacting in diverse far-flung places the same ritual at the same time. Thus not only is the world the same today as it was yesterday and will be tomorrow, but also a feeling of security and stability is produced by the ritual, affirming the one world in opposition to a multiplicity of worlds.

The emotional effect of rituals upon children has been taken up in recent pedagogical literature.[83] The structural power of rituals is seen here, too, as bringing about a feeling of security. Fixed, recurring rituals related to particular seasons of the year mark off the passage of days, weeks, and years. Their very repetition and the rhythm that they thus establish endow the passing of time with structure.[84]

[81] Kertzer 1988, 10.
[82] B. Myerhoff, "A Death in Due Time. Construction of Self and Culture in Ritual Drama", in MacAloon (ed.) 1984, 149–178, here 152.
[83] This literature is discussed in M. Stausberg, "Reflexive Ritualisationen", *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 56 (2004), 54–61.
[84] See also Douglas 1966, 64.

3.4. *The Performance Dimension of Rituals*

Symbols, sensory impulses, and the ritual structure itself facilitate the experience of emotion in ritual. Emotion can be experienced and expressed in actions—or the other way around: Emotion is expressed in actions and than experienced:

> There is . . . some clear evidence that choosing to express an emotion or to cognitively rehearse it may intensify or even create the actual experience of that emotion while choosing to suppress it or not think about it may have the opposite effect.[85]

In any event, ritual activity exerts a direct influence upon emotions. Wikan reports that the Balinese assume that "emotional expression shapes and modulates feeling".[86] This is precisely what rituals in their controlled and at the same time expressive fashion make possible, both through the 'ritual script' and their integration of the human body. The resulting emotional expression can achieve significance both for those whose bodies are actively, expressively involved and also for those who do not physically participate. In the case of wailers, that is, the women hired to keen at mourning ceremonies in some societies, we see that it is precisely those who do not stand in a direct connection with the dead and therefore would not be immediately emotionally affected who become the physical expression of emotions.[87] The activity aspect of ritual makes it possible for the participants to translate their emotional involvement into movement, whether through their own physical expression or, as in the employment of wailers, through the physical expression of 'ritual experts'.

Above and beyond then the simple perception and experience of emotions, rituals give access to a certain regulated latitude for activity and physical expression. The participants thus can be actively involved in the processing of emotions; they might be acting for themselves or they might be acting for their ritual community; their actions might also find their reference in a comprehensive symbol system. All in all, rituals accommodate the fact that emotions can

[85] M. Clark, "Historical Emotionology. From a Social Psychologist's Perspective", A.E. Barnes and P.N. Sternes (eds), *Social History and Issues in Human Consciousness. Some Interdisciplinary Connections* (New York, 1989), 262–269.
[86] Wikan, *Managing Turbulent Hearts*, 294–312, here 302.
[87] For the effect of expressed emotions upon other people see, e.g., A. Bandura, *Social Learning Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, 1977), 65.

demand physical expression and through this physical expression they can then be altered, diminished, or furthered.[88]

4. *Conclusion*

In sum, then, rituals offer a space of experience that can take up, alter, express, and also produce emotions in a special way. Rituals are able to do this because they draw on established, culturally constructed, and maintained systems of symbols—pre-formed 'models of world' already associated with certain emotions. Their material dimension makes use of sensory perceptions that in turn arouse and influence emotions—emotions that may be grounded in universal neurological processes, as well as in their connections to symbol systems and with personal experience or memories. The controlled experience of emotion is made possible through the structural dimension inherent in ritual as such. Within the ritual event these three dimensions: the symbolic, the sensory, and the structural, overlap and interact both with one another and also with the performative dimension—the physical activity—of the ritual. Embodied in ritual action and embedded within a symbol system, emotions are expressed, sensorially perceived, and experienced, as well as controlled and checked within a ritual structure. At the same time, the experiential space of the ritual brings together perceptions of the symbolic, the sensory, and the structural and focuses them upon the particular emotions of the individual participants. The individual is thus able to relate to emotions in a controlled situation and provoke, express, communicate, or alter them, though without robbing them of their own peculiar dynamic.

[88] See also Jack Barbalets on Durkheim: "Durkheim's somatic theory of emotion holds not only that collectives or groups as opposed to individuals may be the locus of emotional experience, but that the means of their attaining ritual emoton is through socially situated bodily movements and relationships rather than through merely cognitive or cultural processes. . . . Rituals are formalized arrangements of bodily articulation that produce the efficacious aspects of the affective dimension of the things they represent by situating the body of individuals in an appropriate interactional context. . . . rituals produce emotions because of the arrangements of and context within which bodies are situated by them" (J.M. Barbalet, "Ritual Emotion and Bodywork. A Note on the Uses of Durkheim", W. Wentworth and J. Ryan [eds], *Social Perspectives on Emotion* II (Greenwich, 1994), 111–123, here 121.

FRAMING

Don Handelman

The idea of framing is potentially a powerful concept by means of which one can theorize ritual as different from, similar to, and interactive with not-ritual. Yet such thinking is little developed, and framing is treated primarily as a weak metaphor with which to summarize ritual.[1] Apart from this and similar usages, framing in the humanities is used mainly in the study of narrative (through ideas like that of 'master frame') and in the social sciences in research on collective action, social movements, and mass communication—these works have sporadic relevance to the use of framing to theorize ritual.[2]

Lineal Framing

Using lineal framing to discuss ritual depends on a single premise: that the realities of ritual are different from those of not-ritual. If this premise is acceptable, then it gives framing theory the initial impetus to discuss ritual. The premise is akin to the statement of the mathematician, G. Spencer Brown: "Draw a distinction."[3] Making a distinction always invokes its separate 'sides' in relation to one another, as these 'sides' come into existence with the separation made by the distinction. Spencer Brown argues that, "There can be no distinction without motive, and there can be no motive unless contents are seen to differ in value."[4] Making the distinction between ritual and not-ritual entails attributing different value to each of these

[1] See, e.g., Strathern and Stewart 1998.

[2] In these works, framing is understood primarily as an ideological process that focuses social action. See M.W. Steinberg, "Tilting the Frame. Considerations on Collective Action From a Discursive Turn", *Theory and Society* 27 (1998), 845–872; R.D. Benford and D.A. Snow, "Framing Processes and Social Movements", *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000), 611–639.

[3] G. Spencer Brown, *Laws of Form* (London, 1969), 3.

[4] Spencer Brown, *Laws of Form*, 1.